

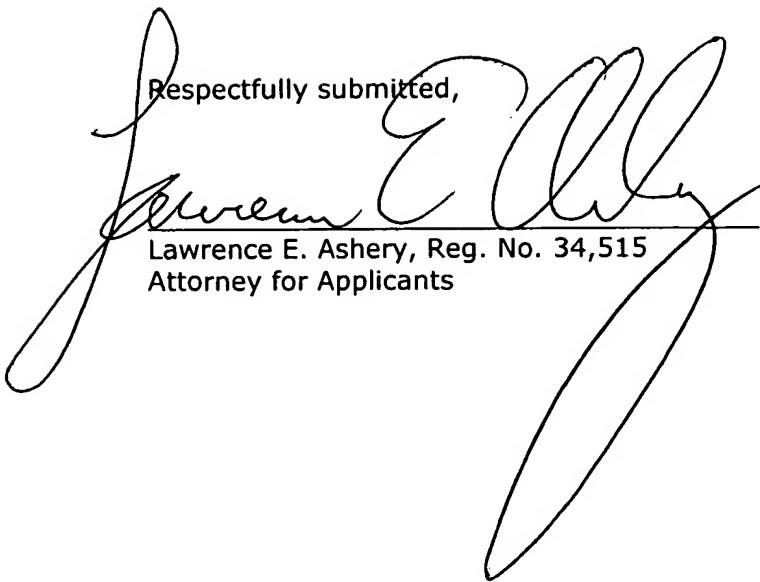
**Amendment to the Abstract:**

The Abstract has been amended. A revised Abstract is attached.

Between network connection apparatuses connected to each other by use of a virtual redundant arrangement, a first network connection apparatus that is in a standby state receives an advertisement message from a second network connection apparatus that is active as a network connection apparatus, and uses a priority comparing section (203) to compare its own priority with the priority in the received advertisement message. When its own priority is higher, the first network connection apparatus uses a master down timer comparing section (212) to compare the remaining time of a master down timer (205) with the time as weighted in accordance with its own priority and resets the timer for a shorter time. ~~When the master down time expires, a message processing section (202) of the first network connection apparatus notifies the second network connection apparatus that the first network connection apparatus has been shifted to an active state, whereby a switching of master backup can be performed swiftly.~~

Attachment

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Attorney for Applicants

LEA/dlm  
Attachment: Abstract

Dated: March 3, 2005

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Kathleen Libby

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## ABSTRACT

Between network connection apparatuses connected to each other by use of a virtual redundant arrangement, a first network connection apparatus that is in a standby state receives an advertisement message from a second network connection apparatus that is active as a network connection apparatus, and uses a priority comparing section to compare its own priority with the priority in the received advertisement message. When its own priority is higher, the first network connection apparatus uses a master down timer comparing section to compare the remaining time of a master down timer with the time as weighted in accordance with its own priority and resets the timer for a shorter time.